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Lesson's learnt

By Will Nicholls

I haven't missed a Grand Council/Cree Regional Authority Annual General Assembly since *the Nation* first went to press. Every one of them has been fun, unique and thoroughly enjoyable. Going to Eastmain without my wingman, Neil Diamond, felt as though something was missing. He was up in the belly of Great Whale working on his next cinematic opus.

The AGA itself was well run without taxing the stamina of those attending. Kudos to Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come on the new weeklong format instead of the past three-day marathons. He also kept the momentum of the AGA rolling at a pace not seen before. You'll notice in the feature on the AGA there aren't many resolutions and I can understand why. With more time to look at and discuss issues resolutions weren't put forward just to have one. If an issue needed more thought and time to examine it fully before making a decision, it was agreed upon.

In this way Coon Come has changed the way Crees look at and deal with the world. His studies in political science are apparent not only in this but in the possibilities of Cree governance. The framework agreement on governance is impressive but even so Coon Come wants to make sure every Cree has the opportunity to participate in the process. I encourage all of you to attend the community tours on this issue. Many of the past complaints have been addressed from control of the land, Cree consent and participation on development, the eventual abolishment of the Municipality of James Bay, a regional government over the territory that includes Cree and much more. If there is something missing then the Grand Council wants to hear from you. Coon Come has said he doesn't want to tell people what the leaders are

doing but rather to have all Crees be a part of it.

Eastmain deserves a round of applause for the way they hosted the AGA. There was something to do every night and Eastmainiacs were more than friendly. I felt I was in a crowd of old friends and family the entire time. The



last time *the Nation* boys went to Eastmain was the last time they had a Grand Council/CRA AGA so I asked for a community tour. I was impressed with the changes. The Band Office is more than just offices but a collection of artwork and old photos. The photos will be kept for a certain amount of time and then given to the descendants of the individuals portrayed in them. They will be replaced with others from Eastmain's journey through life.

It wasn't a bad lesson to be reminded that while cherishing the past we should share it and renew it while we ourselves help to create a better future. In the end that is what matters and Eastmain and this year's AGA taught me that.

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photo by:
Will Nicholls

The last days of summer

By Sonny Orr



The alarm rings at eight this morning, signaling that the first day of school is about to start. Rushing around, deciding if cereal is enough to keep us going until coffee break, we are quickly reminded that kids don't drink coffee, so bacon and eggs are whipped up with strong coffee for the cook. This will be the norm until the first snowfall, making the breakfast ritual a lot earlier, because it takes extra time to put on more clothes, warm up the house, get the hair dried and all that other preparation, before heading out into the late fall morning. Whoa, wait a minute... it's still August, what am I talking about? Am I that anxious for winter to set in? Ahhhh, the coffee is doing its job and slowly, I wake up to a good day.

Ding, ding, ding... the school bells ring and the first kids, with their parents on hand, show up for registration. Looking for good friends and popular teachers, some kids get separated and that teacher you love to learn from did not return... but hey, the replacement is pretty good looking and very energetic. Finally, the school hears from the principal, whose talk focuses on attendance and consistency, commitment and no bullying allowed, ever.

After figuring out where the class is, as the kids all seem to know, tugging parents down long hallways to show off their home class and new teachers. Soon, the flurry of students subside into empty halls, as class still has to be readied and floors need the final polish. The books are a little late in arriving, but, not to worry, there's still the proverbial blackboard, which quickly defines everyone's seating order. For the new teachers, alphabetical order seems to work until family members are separated enough to concentrate on the task at hand, to learn.

Astonishingly, the kids quickly become attentive students, glad that summer days are actually busy, instead of hanging out at home or outside. Today, schools have a decent surprise coming up. Yes, super high-speed internet access that everyone's been waiting for. The kids will get it at school first, before most homes do, and soon, they might not want to come home after school because of all that incredible broad-

band. Hopefully, this will mean that the time waiting for downloading, video conferencing and all that stuff, will be replaced with learning quicker. Given the average student's attention span on one subject can now be placed with multiple answers to multiple questions within a few seconds, as cyber-text becomes the new language. HASGA? (How about some geography anyone?)

For instance, back in the day, we learnt about latitude and longitude and for some high fliers, altitude. Today, it's WYGPSC? (What's your GPS coordinates?), ITYBS (I'll track you by satellite), SWIM (See what I mean). Today, kids have different aspirations. Just ask any child where they would like to go to school after elementary and most will tell you that want to go to Hogwarts and become a magician, like Harry Potter. Anyone wish to cast a spell on my paycheque and magically increase my wealth? Anyone? Perhaps these magician wannabes just might end up making computer graphics magic and make their own digital movies in Cree.

But don't get me wrong, I think that many children have what it takes to become incredible assets to our growing communities. How many people do you know speak three languages on a regular basis, or who can whip up a fire in the middle of a wet snowstorm? How many people out there can hang out on FB just moments after having witnessed their son's first goose kill? How many caribou or moose have you eaten because that nerdy kid with a Blackberry permanently attached to his thumbs figured out a better way to monitor the herd by satellite or by instant communications? Not too many, I would say, but up here, it common now. Texting is now an official Cree word and will forever be in our lexicon.

Times have changed and I hope that the education system recognizes this. For today, school is an answer too many modern problems, but just as technology takes hold, it becomes replaced by some new technological gizmo that takes the world by storm. LLB (Long live books)!

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Call for national inquiry for murdered and missing Aboriginal women

By Amy German

Just when it thought it was going to be able to make some headway, the Native Women's Association of Canada has found itself without the means to participate in the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry in British Columbia – and they are not alone.

According to Executive Director Claudette Dumont-Smith, NWAC was delighted to have been granted “full standing” at the BC inquiry along with 13 other groups, most of which are Aboriginal.

“The inquiry into what happened in the Lower East Side of Vancouver that was going to look at police response, how many women have gone missing/ been murdered and where there were gaps,” explained Dumont-Smith.

And, having accumulated so much data on not only missing and murdered Aboriginal women but the specific circumstances and issues that perpetuate the situation through its Sisters in Spirit Initiative (SIS) over a five-year period, NWAC was an ideal participant.

However, while NWAC's knowledge, expertise and data could have enriched the findings of the inquiry, the association found itself unable to provide this input as it was announced that none of the groups given standing would be offered any assistance in their legal fees.

According to Dumont-Smith, being granted “full standing” means that a group can participate in every aspect of the inquiry and all of its sessions. As an inquiry of this nature is executed however in a formal court setting, each group with standing requires legal representation to pose any questions to the police and other groups presenting and also to ensure that the group they are representing is kept in the loop of all of the legalese.

But, without legal representation or the funding to acquire this legal representation, participation is absolutely impossible.

“First off it is very costly to hire legal council as well as assistance for them as there are mounds of documents that have to be read and researched. There was just no way that we could hire one or two legal representatives to attend these meetings as we don't know how long they are going to be and how much work it would be for them. The bottom line was that it was very expensive and we don't have the money,” said Dumont-Smith.

“THE INQUIRY INTO WHAT HAPPENED IN THE LOWER EAST SIDE OF VANCOUVER THAT WAS GOING TO LOOK AT POLICE RESPONSE, HOW MANY WOMEN HAVE GONE MISSING/BEEN MURDERED AND WHERE THERE WERE GAPS.”

Dumont-Smith added that usually, when commissions of this nature are called in Canada, full standing means that legal representation is covered by the province or the Crown.

NWAC was not the only group that has had to pull out; a large portion of those 13, including the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, have also had to pull out for the same reasons.

As a result, Dumont-Smith said the outcome of the commission is likely to be very one-sided.

“It seems as though they want to predict the outcome of this commission when that is really not the role of a commission. They are writing this before the work has even been done,” she said.

With this in mind, NWAC has just announced that it is calling on the federal government for a national commission or inquiry into the 580 cases of missing/murdered Aboriginal women that it has documented.

In that the call for the new inquiry was made just this past July 28, the federal government has yet to respond to the demand made by NWAC but

Dumont-Smith said she was hopeful, particularly in light of the government ending the SIS research.

While the SIS initiative researched cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women from 2005-2010, the funding for that initiative not only ended in March 2010 but the association has also found itself gagged as it has been stipulated in its federal funding that NWAC cannot use funding for lobbying or research.

While the Feds promised that they would earmark \$10 million to address the missing and murdered Aboriginal women issue, much of that has gone to the RCMP for a new data base that would ignore all of the Aboriginal specific circumstances and research SIS did.

Instead of looking back in anger, Dumont-Smith said the association is going to be looking at obtaining new federal partners to bring this endeavour forward and fight for a national inquiry to examine exactly what went wrong in the cases of these 580 women and how the system failed them.

In the meantime NWAC has continued to work with police forces and any other group that has been willing to benefit from its expertise.

“We will do everything that we can to change this and so we are willing to work collaboration with others. But, at the same time, we feel that we would need to be equal partners in any effort that is being put in place to address this issue.

“We have to be at the forefront of this movement as we have a vested interest in this issue,” said Dumont-Smith.

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Inspiration at the AGA

A handicapped Cree does what he can to help disease research

By Amy German

news

As Crees from all over Eeyou Istchee congregated in Eastmain for the Annual General Assembly, one local man went about meeting as many delegates as he could simply to raise money for Parkinson's disease.

But, why Preston Gilpin does this is a whole different story. Gilpin doesn't have Parkinson's and, for that matter, he has never known anyone intimately who has ever suffered from the disease either. It is rather his simple desire to see diseases cured and raise funds for research charities that has seen him raise over \$10,000 over the course of his lifetime for diseases like breast cancer, leukemia and Parkinson's.

"Usually I will go around town, house to house to let people know that I am doing this, looking for donations to find a cure for one of these diseases," said Gilpin.

But, what really motivates Gilpin to get out and raise money for disease research is how much he can relate to those who have suffered the victimization of illness, having been born handicapped himself.

Gilpin has spina bifida or a cleft spine, which is a developmental congenital disorder caused by the incomplete closing of the embryonic neural tube. As a result, Gilpin's spine was damaged by the disease though he can walk and says that most people see him as a "normal person."

But, this does not mean that he hasn't led a life of adversity. Gilpin said when he was born the doctors told his family that he would never talk, that he would never crawl and that he would certainly never be able to walk. He however beat all of the odds, surpassing all three milestones.

Gilpin says his family was also told that he would never, ever live beyond the age of 18 but, he beat those odds also, having surpassed his 25th birthday, another feat he says he thought he would never see.

How did he beat those odds exactly?

"Well, I have never done any drugs or alcohol," he says, but laughingly acknowledges that his lack of interest in substance abuse may not be the only contributing factor.

What is really beyond the longevity he has experienced despite his condition, he doesn't actually know but was not really willing to speculate about either.

While Gilpin may have had his own cross to bear with spina bifida, he has pretty much devoted his whole life to raising money for disease research starting in 2006.

He said he would chose these different disease research charities simply because he would hear about those suffering from these diseases through his dad and then devote himself to raising money simply because he wanted to help.

"It has helped me to do this and I feel as though has really helped those organizations despite how I have never really met the people from these organizations. They send me their forms and I go out and collect for them because they are having a campaign for a few days or weeks," said Gilpin.

His most recent cause has been Parkinson's disease as he was inspired by a couple living in Val-d'Or who he met only briefly. Gilpin said he had heard about a man who owned a store in Val-d'Or whose wife was suffering from Parkinson's, and, after seeing them once four years ago, he



Preston Gilpin on stage at the 2nd Annual Youth Concert 2011 in Eastmain

began his crusade to raise money for Parkinson's research.

In the last four years, Gilpin said he has raised between \$4000-\$5000 for the cause and isn't stopping his crusade anytime soon.

Going from delegate to delegate at the Eastmain AGA, Gilpin said he was able to raise almost \$500 through the generosity of the attendees.

As fundraising has become his own labour of love, Gilpin has no intention to stop his campaign to see cures for what he cares about anytime soon. To find out how you too can support Gilpin in his effort to raise money for Parkinson's disease, call him at 819-977-2932.



the Nation

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Rollerblading for cancer families

Claiming to have “knocked down” his own case of leukemia, David Coonishish knows only too well what kind of a strain cancer treatment can put on a family. This is why Coonishish is looking to rollerblade a total of 1600 km, from Montreal to Chisasibi, to raise money and awareness for the families of those who are struggling with cancer.

“I am trying to help the sick people, the ones who are battling things like this now. I was struggling financially because I didn’t have an income for so many months and my bills just skyrocketed. I had a really hard time and it was hard for my children and family,” said Coonishish.

Coonishish left Montreal on August 15 and is hoping to arrive in Chisasibi 10 days later on August 25 or 26. His ambitious goal is to rollerblade between 150-250 km per day, with only one day of rest in Val-d’Or in the middle of his trip.

According to the brave young rollerblader, fundraising has already begun within the Cree communities but for those looking to help out Coonishish’s cause, more information can be found in the “David’s Journey” Facebook group.



Waskaganish election results

The election results are in for Waskaganish’s most recent run for Chief. Coming out on top, with 268 votes, Gordon Blackned is now Waskaganish’s new Chief. Blackned

beat out Darlene Cheechoo, who came in a close second with 246 votes, Raymond Blackned with 74, Hugo Hester with 73, Steve Diamond with 70 and Marty Cowboy with 60 votes.

The following individuals were also voted in as new councillors in Waskaganish: David Erless Sr., Redfern Blueboy, Brenda Weistche, Ron Diamond and Queenie Steven.

Ontario inquiry called into First Nations jury rolls issue

After several years of First Nations peoples being excluded from jury rolls in the Thunder Bay area, the province of Ontario will finally be holding an inquiry to find out exactly what went wrong.

Trials and inquiries that call for juries in the Thunder Bay district have been on hold indefinitely since March after the representativeness of juries was called into question because on-reserve Aboriginals, who make up a large portion of the areas demographic, were being systematically excluded from jury rolls.

According to the CBC, Attorney General Chris Bentley announced former Supreme Court of Canada justice Frank Iacobucci will put in charge of investigating how the system has failed Canada’s Native people when it comes to jury representation.

The system breakdown in terms of Aboriginal involvement in Ontario juries first broke down in recent years when it was decided that Indian and Northern Affairs no longer lists of Aboriginals for jury rolls over privacy issues. Since that time no other department picked up the slack, leaving Aboriginals excluded.

It is expected that Iacobucci’s systemic review and recommendations will stand for the entire province, not just Thunder Bay, to ensure that Aboriginals be represented on juries throughout Ontario.

Clarification

In the last issue of the Nation (Vol. 18, Issue 20, August 12, 2011), the name of the new Chief of the Washaw Sibi Nation was incorrect. The Chief’s name is Pauline Trapper-Hester not Pauline Hester. The Nation regrets the error.



Comic strip courtesy of Tundra Comics: www.tundracomics.com



Assessing the year

Longest AGA ever took place in Eastmain

by Will Nicholls

It began August 8 and ended five days later on August 12. Past Annual General Assemblies may have only run three days but the new weeklong format was more relaxing for those who attended this year's Grand Council of the Crees/ Cree Regional Authority assembly in Eastmain. That community may be one of the smallest but they showed they had heart and could host with the best of them.

To be honest a few technophobes looked shell-shocked when Eastmain lost power to half of its community. The internet was down and for many this was their main way to communicate. Currently Eastmain has no cell service (though it will be in the near future) and the one payphone in the community centre saw a lot of service by those wanting to call home, loved ones and, of course, the office.

The power outage was apparently caused by a Whiskeychan flying into a transformer. Perhaps the land was reminding people of the power of the environment they were a part of for so long and still are. At least that's what a little birdie told me. It did affect the proceedings from being broadcast throughout the nine Cree communities though.

Eastmain stepped up to the plate and showed, power or no power, Crees still are the best when it comes to hospitality. Smoked fish was handed out to delegates and guests. Not only was there

smoked white fish but they even had smoked Speckled Trout.

So there was fish but what about the meat you ask? This is the one time of the year when Crees can question the past year's actions by entities, organizations and leaders or are the checks and balances we put in place just a myth?

The answer isn't as simple or as black-and-white as one would expect. The actions by Oujé-Bougoumou in taking down a sweat lodge went against the previous year's resolutions on traditional and spiritual practices (by the way the issue is close to being resolved) showed a lack of teeth in what is decided by the whole Cree Nation. On the other hand, resolutions pertaining to the actions of the Grand Council and other regional entities are a different story. New agreements relating to governance will see other changes where resolutions leading to by-laws will be enforceable strengthening our Cree democracy.

In the meantime, Monday, August 8, was the usual financial and acceptance of the minutes snorefest until CreeCo and the Board of Compensation found themselves dancing on the AGA spotlight hotspot. The AGA agenda had them presenting on Tuesday but with Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come's ability to make things move, there was time available on Monday. They were not as prepared as they could be with most heads of the

Cree Crown Corporations only arriving for Tuesday. Nevertheless they did the job, including a corporate video that had the AGA clapping enthusiastically.

Another presenter, the Cree School Board, also made use of the video format but theirs was much longer than the five-minute CreeCo presentation. The CSB had close to an hour-long video on what was happening with them. In a truly amazing move they fully embrace the past years of few graduates and problems in the schools. It was well received by all. One school commissioner said changes



are in the works with the CSB that will reflect the hopes, needs and desires of the Cree people and communities.

This year saw five recognitions by the Grand Council. First off the axe was CerAmomy for their Juno win this past year. The award was accepted with the aloof panache one expects from those in the music business. Then they tore the house down with music from almost every genre known. They played reggae, country, pop, rock, rap, hip-hop and, of course, the raw talent and their own sounds and songs we all know. Given their uptempo rendition of The Beatles' "Let it Be", I would let them know there is a new TV talent show called Cover Me Canada, for which they are naturals.

The late Billy Diamond's wife was honoured for her life. Not only did she give credence to the saying behind every great man is a great woman, she proved it in more than one way. She was the confidant who helped Diamond shape and form his ideas and policies.

Former Washaw Shibi Chief Billy Katapatuk received an accolade for being instrumental in making his community the 10th First Nation to be a part of the Grand Council of the Crees.

Dr. George Blacksmith was honoured for completing a PhD. Blacksmith is one of the few in the Cree Nation who

has earned his title rather than receiving an honorary one.

Ginette Lajoie, from the infamous environmental department of the Grand Council, found herself in front of the Assembly to receive honours and a plate attesting to her dedication and appreciation of her service to the Cree people. She retired earlier this year and will be missed.

Wednesday night saw square dancing Eastmain-style. Was it disappointing after Tuesday's CerAmomy? Not at all, as it

"OUJÉ-BOUGOUMOU IN TAKING DOWN A SWEAT LODGE WENT AGAINST THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS ON TRADITIONAL AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES."

was refreshing to have this traditional moment shared with all the delegates. Did I mention it was the second wedding dance as the first happened before everyone dropped in to visit Eastmain? I slipped outside as my square-dancing skills encourage youth to commit vile and disgusting crimes as to forget the horror of my best attempts to master that form of dance.

During the day I was told some presentations had been cancelled. One of

them was the Cree Nation Trust. One might question that decision as the CNT had a deficit of \$33 million or so this year. The Nation certainly did, so we had the fund's annual report analyzed by a part-time employee.

The findings were shocking or at least it felt like you stuck your tongue on a nine-volt battery. From out of the capital the CNT has, it could only make money in good market conditions our specialist decreed. Imagine the response

from the yellow journalist crowd warming themselves at *the Nation's* campfire. If we had any capital then we too could make money given good market conditions. As for that deficit, under the Agreement surrounding that money, certain funds have to be dispersed to different organizations every year and this has to be done no matter what. It isn't that much of a surprise then that from time to time there will be a loss and when you are playing around with a



Agreement for the Elders in the Cree Communities

Submission of projects

A *Specific Agreement on "Adapting Regional Services and Infrastructures in Order to Improve Living Conditions of Seniors"* in the Cree Regional Authority, Nord-du-Québec region 2008-2013" was concluded between the Cree Regional Authority (CRA) and the Québec Government in 2008.

The Agreement envisages a financial aid for eligible organizations who wish to develop and set up activities, projects, infrastructures and innovative services in bond with the general objectives of the Agreement.

The general objectives of the Agreement are to:

- enable government, municipal (Band Councils and MRC), regional, university, association and community partners to identify common objectives and projects aimed at improving the contribution of the elderly in their communities;
- contribute to the creation and implementation of projects aimed at improving the living conditions of the elderly;
- foster the social participation of the elderly in local and regional community development;
- promote the benefit and social inclusion of elders by providing a voice for the Elders in Eeyou Ischtee;

The specific objectives of the Agreement are to:

- provide vision, leadership and guidance to the Cree elders;
- provide advice and information on Cree traditional knowledge, cultural and values;
- assist to educate the youth about Cree language, culture and traditions;
- hold Annual meetings to address their needs and concerns expressed by the Elders to the Cree leadership;
- strengthen unity among Cree elders of Eeyou Ischtee;
- foster issues concerning the quality of life, health, social and cultural of the Cree elders;
- realise the role of elders as a creative and active resource for the Cree communities;

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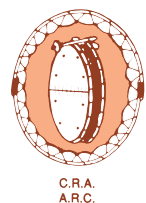
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billion dollars \$33 million isn't so bad after all.

One caution given to us is that while the CNT does what it can to minimize its risks in investments it should be more aware of the global market. It will affect the CNT since about 50% of the investments are in foreign currency. The global market isn't impressed with either the US credit score or the European Union's high indebtedness ratio. Not looking at the present or the future closely could lead to a lack of financial resources when the Cree need them.

Of course, the Cree Board of Health and Social Services came out looking healthy. They staged a Walk Your Talk rally composed of kids and adults walking from just outside of the community accompanied by live music from local traditional drum group Northern Medicine. They talked about some of the alarming statistics concerning health and the Cree communities. Opening the door fully didn't lead to criticism but rather thoughtful discussion on the problems.

All this is just the tip of the iceberg of information and disinformation that happens at every AGA. People were talking governance, framework agreements and the Plan Nord just to name a few topics. So to try to get a better idea of what was going on, *the Nation* managed to interview Grand Chief Coon Come. We caught up to him near the complex's washrooms.

The Nation: *I think this is the longest AGA to date – Monday to Friday.*

Coon Come: You are correct. It is the longest because our members from the past two assemblies raised a lot of issues related to social and health concerns. Included in that was the status of our

educational system. So both entities (health and education) had to do research to address the concerns. So when the CSB made their presentation it was very revealing. On the one hand when you want to begin discussions you have to admit we have a problem here. Before it was defending using your policies, your bylaws or someone else but when you admit you have a problem you can get serious and that's what I think these two entities did. Now people feel they are part of the process and their concerns are being heard. I think people respond to that.

TN: *It's a change as in past AGAs you guys were going late into the night.*

CC: I think that's good. We're not getting younger and I've sat through many AGAs where we went into the wee hours of the morning. I remember one time in Eastmain where we were up until 4 in the morning. Now times have changed and everyone's conscious of their health. We try to have health breaks. There are problems with diabetes and people have to eat. So getting some real rest is good for everyone.

TN: *Do you find that people are more focused with this new way of doing the AGAs?*

CC: I think so. People have to have some time off. Even the Grand Chief has to go to the bathroom. [laughter]

TN: *One of the things I noticed with this AGA and people have said it may be due to the Summer Games in Mistissini, but there is a lack of youth delegates this year.*

CC: I had hoped when the chiefs and councils appointed their delegates they would have included some youth and

Elders. I was a little disappointed that didn't happen. They are the ones who appoint their delegates to attend this AGA. But I do know everyone was talking about the Cree games that were coming up and the youth were getting ready for them. When the assemblies were in Waskaganish and Mistissini, the youth were really excited about them. They prepared and got ready for them. That's good for them and good for health, mind body and soul.

TN: *I know there was supposed to be a message from the Prime Minister of Canada, but due to the power outage that it didn't happen.*

CC: I guess being in a small community like Eastmain there are still things that are needed. There was no cellphone service, internet wasn't everywhere and the power went off. It was very difficult and at times we felt lost. But on one hand the presentations that were made on governance, on the Plan Nord, on the Cree Nation Working Group and the tour were limited to just the members who attended this assembly. I felt bad about that because we lost an opportunity because a lot of people listen to the AGA on the radio. Normally it is a chance to spread the word so people can be aware of it, think about it and digest it. They know we will come up with some kind of final agreement and we don't want them to feel like "why are you coming to us now."

TN: *What would you say is one of the important things for people to consider concerning governance and the working group?*

CC: The Cree Nation Governance Working Group is imperative if we go





down the path of regaining and asserting control and jurisdiction over our lands that people have their input. This is so those Cree values and principles would be incorporated into the thinking of governance. That's why there is a need for the community tours. The framework agreement on governance is crucial because the provincial government through legislative process actually stole the land. So we are regaining what was taken from us where we will have full control. It is done in increments of establishing a Cree Nation government on Category II lands and a regional government on Category III lands. That way Crees can be full participants and nothing can be done without Cree consent and Cree involvement. That's the message and how we set it up are details that we hope Cree leaders and Cree people will contribute to.

On the Plan Nord itself it was important that the Crees be involved and sit at the table across from Quebec Premier Charest. Which we did and being on the inside we were able to say hold it we have major institutional governance structures here that have displaced us in which we were excluded and you are pushing a policy of exclusion and now you are trying to put us back into Category I lands? That is totally unacceptable. If we had not been involved on the Plan Nord then today the Crees would be in court now against Bill 40. Now because we were there we were able to advocate what our former leaders have insisted: this is Cree land. We certainly want to work towards changing the institutional governance structures so Crees can be full participants. That's the main thing that came out of Plan Nord. There will always be developers. There will always be forestry companies, Crown corporations and international corporations who will come into our lands and try to take our trees, the ores and the waters. They will always be there but we have to decide for ourselves how we can be involved in the process and decision-making and have a say in how development takes place.

TN: *What about MBI? I know it was discussed that Crees would become part of a regional government structure, is that going anywhere?*

CC: With our framework government structure MBI will be abolished and no longer exist. All the entities that were created from Bill 40 will be abolished and will be replaced by how we define to govern ourselves by the Cree Nation government on Category II lands and a regional government for Category III lands. We will have by-law powers over the municipal, the lands, the zoning, and watersheds. That means we will be able to develop five-year plans on how we want to develop Eeyou Istchee. If we're talking about protected areas, well which ones do you want to protect and which rivers do you want to maintain? I think the dream of our people to have full control and a say in what happens in Eeyou Istchee I feel we are almost there. There is still a lot of work ahead of us but I think we can do it.

TN: *I know you had a chiefs' meeting concerning wind power and other alternative energy sources the Crees may get involved in. What came out of that meeting?*

CC: As you know former Grand Chief Ted Moses had an understanding from Hydro-Québec that about 500 megawatts would be set aside exclusively for the Crees. Over the years the Crees have tried to get that back. I've managed to secure the 500 megawatts. Now the Crees will have to decide what projects to put forth. Now every community has their own little projects whether it is Mistissini, Chisasibi, whether it is run of the river or whether it is in partnership with another developer of wind, run of the river or solar energy.

What came out of that meeting is we decided to have a Cree Nation approach because some of the projects won't happen today. They may happen three to five years down the line so what projects do we submit today? Within two weeks we will have an idea of what projects will be submitted. So we are talking about the justification that Hydro-Québec is saying why we should go for a PPA. This actually has to do with the upgrading of

the turbines at LG-4. We need to have answers to our questions concerning the upgrades to the turbines. That would be the justification for the PPA. We do have a table and Hydro-Québec has appointed negotiators and we have appointed our negotiators. It's internal since this is all in our backyard so we have to decide which projects to submit.

TN: There have been some concerns that the upgrades will create extended dead

zones along the shores because of the new rise and fall of waters?

CC: Yes, under the La Grande complex of 1975 in the technical description there are certain guaranteed water levels and flows of water. Presently the La Grande project has increased by five times its flow. With the new technology we have to ask if there will be another increase in its flow. The increased flow could cause all kinds of erosion down-

stream to the riverbanks. If this affects the water table then we might be looking at an amendment to the Agreement. These are questions we have and can't answer but we have developed those questions and put them forth to Hydro-Québec.

TN: Is there anything else?

CC: Just tell everyone I am tall, dark and handsome and doing well.

2011 Grand Council/ Cree Regional Authority Resolutions (drafts): Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) Cree Regional Authority Annual General Assembly

Resolution

Subject: 2012 Annual General Assembly

Whereas the location of the 38th meeting of the Grand Council of the Crees and the 35th meeting of the Cree Regional Authority Annual General Assembly must be determined by the members of the 2012 Annual General Assembly of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority.

Be It Resolved:

That the next (2012) Annual General Assembly of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Cree Regional Authority be held in Waskaganish at a date to be determined by the Board of Directors of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Council of the Cree Regional Authority.

Resolution No: 2011

Subject: Rupert River Diversion Impacts Concerning Remedial Works

Whereas at the Annual General Assembly held on July 19, 20 & 21, 2011,

the members of the Crees of the Waskaganish First Nation have brought up some concerns about the impacts of the Rupert River Diversion;

Whereas the diversion project impacted the normal navigation on the Rupert River at the mouth which flows into the Rupert and James Bays;

Whereas the members still use the Rupert River extensively to access choice fishing areas and their trapping and hunting grounds on other rivers flowing into Rupert and James Bays and along the Coast;

Whereas the members of the Crees of the Waskaganish First Nation at the 2011 Annual General Assembly deem it necessary and appropriate to demand to Hydro-Québec that the necessary remedial works be undertaken immediately to address the impacts and fulfill the commitments that were made concerning the mouth of the Rupert River and the Rupert Bay;

Be It Resolved:

That the members of the 2010-2011 Annual General Assembly of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou

Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority hereby mandate the Board/Council of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority examine the process by which the necessary human and financial resources can be provided to support the Crees of the Waskaganish First Nation in their pursuit to have Hydro-Québec implement remedial measures in regards to the impacts on the mouth of the Rupert River and Rupert Bay, in particular those impacts related to the continued use and navigation of the Rupert River and Bay by the Crees of Waskaganish including such measures but not limited to the dredging, establishment of marina, clean-up and creation of an aesthetic shoreline.

Resolution No: 2011

Subject: Waskaganish Access Road Concerning the Resurfacing and other Improvements on the Waskaganish Access Road

Whereas pursuant to the New Relationship Agreement signed February 2, 2002, construction works started on





the Rupert River diversion project which included extensive use of the Access Road and impacted the members of the Waskaganish First Nation and other users of the Access Road and community roads;

Whereas the use of the Access Road and community roads in the said works contributed to extensive vehicle damage, such as broken windshields from flying debris, flat tires from sharp stones, and also affected the health of community members with respiratory problems;

Whereas the members of the Crees of Waskaganish First Nation deem it appropriate that all necessary measures be taken to improve the condition of the Access Road and community roads;

Whereas the said works shall include but not be limited to the resurfacing, safety signs and other improvements, and that pavement be installed on the Access Road and community roads of the community of Waskaganish;

Be It Resolved:

That the members of the 2010-2011 Annual General Assembly of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority hereby mandate the Board/Council of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority examine the process by which the necessary human and financial resources can be provided to support the Crees of the Waskaganish First Nation in their request to restore and improve the condition of the Access Road and community roads of Waskaganish.

Resolution No: 2011

Subject: Issues from Delegates of Whapmagoostui

Whereas the Whapmagoostui delegates would like certain matters to be followed up that affect their community as well as others.

Be It Resolved:

That the members of the 2010-2011 Annual General Assembly of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority hereby request that Board/ Council of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority address the following:

1. A mentorship program for youth with the Cree Naskapi Commission (1 from coast, 1 from inland);

2. Review of the Inuit and Cree mining policies and how these two policies will affect Whapmagoostui;

3. Review of the Plan Nord with a view to pre-empting hydro projects or massive flooding in the Whapmagoostui area;

4. That a process as called for in the framework agreement on governance between the Cree and Inuit be put in place to address the overlapping issues with respect to Cree and Inuit Governance;

5. Consultants – That the GCCEI review the business links and partnerships that exist between the consulting firms and other companies in order to eliminate conflict of interest by firms who provide financial or other technical advice to the Cree Nation;

6. Funding allocations – That the management and leadership of the GCCEI/CRA regularly update and consult the local councils in how the allocation process used to determine the priority in terms of allocating capital projects in any fiscal year and develop short term (3 years) and long term (8 years) plans;

7. Development of a policy to require that Cree political candidates publicly disclose financial contributors to campaigns including amounts;

8. Review of the past 8 years of AGA resolutions and update the status of implementation; and

9. Conduct a review of the environmental and social impact, such as contamination and debris from mining exploration activities with a view to ensuring greater environmental and social protection in Eeyou Istchee.

Resolution

Subject: Youth Week recognition by GCCEI and Local Band Councils

Whereas the Cree Nation Youth Council (CNYC) having met at Old Nemaska, on July 26, 27 & 28, 2011 for the Annual Youth General Assembly and it was Resolved that a "Youth Week" be established, recognized, supported and

funded by local Band Councils and GCCEI/CRA;

Whereas "Youth Week" would involve the active participation of Regional and Local Leaders and other Cree entities;

Be It Resolved: That the members of the 2010-2011 Annual General Assembly of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/ Cree Regional Authority hereby call for the recognition, establishment and support of "Youth Week" throughout Eeyou Istchee by the Board/Council of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority and other Local Authorities and Regional Entities.

Resolution

Subject: An urgent need to address addictions /dependencies by all Cree organizations in Eeyou Istchee.

Whereas, substance abuse in the Eeyou Istchee has reached levels of epidemic proportions and will continue to worsen if we do not make significant changes.

Whereas, our children first use of substances is at an average age of 11 and 12 years old and now having some children as young as 8 and 9 years old using for the first time.

Whereas, there is evident correlations between, children using substances and or parents substances use, and school; academic achievements, absenteeism, drop out and high school graduations.

Whereas, communities members live in fear in our communities, for their own and for their children's safety due to the increase of violence resulting from substance abuse.

Whereas, substance abuse and dependencies is affecting Miyuupimatisiwin of the individuals, the family and the communities in Eeyou Istchee.

Be It Resolved: That, the Cree Leadership and partnering organizations, commit themselves to share the responsibilities and to take concrete actions against substance abuse / dependencies to restore Miyuupimatisiwin in Eeyou Istchee.

That, this commitment will be confirmed by signing the; Bimutidah Shdiyimuwn, declaration for actions to address addictions/dependencies in Eeyou Istchee by all Cree Entities and Councils of the Cree Nation no later than one month

That, the Grand Council of the Cree, the Cree Regional Authority, the Cree Nation Communities and partnering organizations support to hold a Cree Regional Summit on addictions and dependencies before the next Annual General Assembly.

That, Cree Regional Working Group on Dependencies (CRWGD) be recognized as an advisory and consultative group for Eeyou Istchee on issues of dependencies and addictions and that the CRWGD, be mandated to;

-coordinate the regional Summit of on addiction and dependencies.

-follow up on past and future regional resolutions related to addictions and dependencies.

Resolution No: 2011

Subject: Support for Cree Business: Sweet Grass Restaurant

Whereas, Pheobe Blacksmith and her family have invested themselves and resources into the Sweet Grass Restaurant business which is a business that showcase and promotes the importance of Cree culture and in particular Cree cuisine in the city of Ottawa;

Whereas the Sweet Grass Restaurant is an important tool for promoting Cree culture, Cree communities and can play an important role in tourism develop as a tool for introduction to potential visitors from the South;

It is resolved

That the members of the 2010-2011 Annual General Assembly of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) /Cree Regional Authority hereby applaud the Sweet Grass Restaurant for its showcasing of Cree culture and Cree cuisine and call on all Cree organizations to support the restaurant through patronage.





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The up-and-comers

Young Crees attend Major Hockey training camps across Canada

By Daniel Coyle

Training camps opened this month for teams in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJHL), Ontario Hockey League (OHL) and Western Hockey League (WHL). Among the hundreds of 16- to 20-year-olds attending these camps are a number of young hockey players from Cree communities across Canada.

Waskaganish's Brett Hester is attending his 2nd training camp with the Val-d'Or Foreurs of the QMJHL. Read about Brett and his younger brother Alexander, who is in camp with Midget AAA Forestiers d'Amos, on page 20 of this issue.

Four other players are also attending QMJHL camps. Jonah Coonishish-Coon, who hails from Mistissini, is in camp with the Acadie-Bathurst Titan. Coonishish-Coon, who turns 18 this season, spent last season as a left-winger with the Lewiston Maineiacs and was picked up by the Titan after the Maineiacs folded.

Silas Neeposh is attempting to make the jump to the QMJHL with the Chicoutimi Saguenéens. The 18-year-old defenseman joins Chicoutimi after a

solid season with Midget AAA Forestiers d'Amos, where he racked up 24 points in 42 games along with 56 penalty minutes.

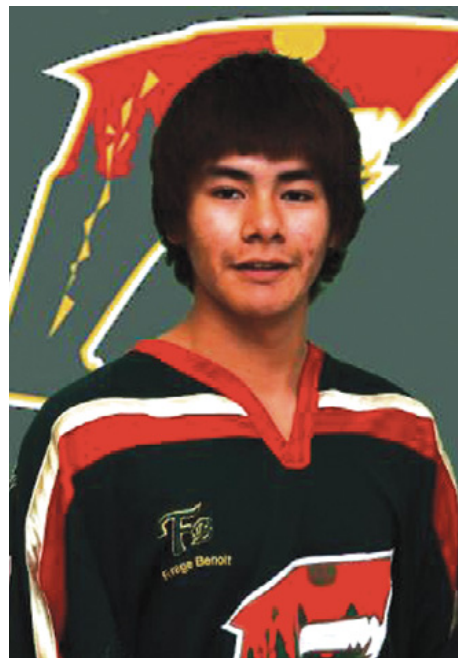
Neeposh's teammate in Amos, Deverick Ottereyes, is in camp with the PEI Rocket. Selected by the Rocket in the 8th round of the 2011 QMJHL draft, Ottereyes hopes to help the Rocket compete with divisional rivals like the 2011 Memorial Cup champs Saint John Sea Dogs.

Fellow Forestier Andrew Kistabish was invited to training camp with the Shawinigan Cataractes, but may return to Amos for another season of Midget AAA.

In Ontario, Josh Moore, a 16-year-old Moose Cree band member, is at camp with the OHL's Mississauga St. Michael's Majors. Moore, who plays both left wing and centre, was selected in the 15th round of the OHL draft on May 7. In 2010/2011, he played with the Sudbury Minor Midget Wolves, where he recorded an impressive 69 points in 42 games.

In western Canada, Todd Fiddler from Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan

returns to the WHL's Prince Albert Raiders after a strong rookie season last year. Jared Iron of Canoe Lake First Nation is seeking to crack the Kootenay Ice lineup after a strong 2010 season which included playing on the Canada West Under-17 squad.



Deverick Ottereyes



Silas Neeposh



Jonah Coonishish-Coon

Working hard for the dream

Waskaganish's Hester brothers are making their mark among hockey's elite

By Daniel Coyle

While most people are still enjoying summer sun and outdoor activities, hundreds of young hockey players reported in early August to training camps across Canada in preparation for the start of the 2011/2012 Major Junior Hockey season.

One of the players in attendance at the training camp of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League's Val-d'Or Foreurs is Waskaganish's own Brett Hester. The 18-year-old is seeking to build on a strong 2010/2011 campaign with the Foreurs after making the team as a walk-on during last year's training camp. And Brett isn't the only Hester boy attending an elite level hockey training camp this month — Brett's younger brother, 16-year-old Alexander, is in camp with the AAA Midget Forestiers d'Amos.

Making it to the Major Junior level is a significant accomplishment, even for the most privileged players who play in major cities like Montreal and Ottawa. It is particularly impressive for young players like Brett and Alexander to reach this



Brett Hester celebrates after scoring in a game versus the Rimouski Oceanic - February 5, 2011

Hester, who this season expects to put in excess of 60,000 kilometres on his new vehicle, travelling to distant arenas to support his boys and watch them play.

In addition to being Hockey Dad Extraordinaire, Charles is Waskaganish's Director of Youth & Recreation and runs the town's Minor Hockey Association. Speaking with Charles, it takes little time

wee or bantam. They have to learn very quickly what it takes to make the team."

This philosophy seems to have rubbed off on Brett, who follows a daily schedule that would challenge most adults. This includes starting his day at 5AM, having breakfast and getting on the ice by 8AM. At 10AM, he goes to school, after which he heads directly to the gym before spending his evenings either back on the ice or taking care of homework.

"It is like having a full-time job," says Charles. "You have to be willing to work hard, get up every morning and go to practice and work hard at practice. It is a full day's work — an adult situation."

The commitment doesn't seem to faze Brett, who models his game after another hard-working hockey player, NHL veteran Manny Malhotra. And it has also impressed Val-d'Or Foreurs coach Marc-André Dumont.

"As a 17-year-old rookie, Brett had some good times and bad times," Dumont explains. "He showed a lot of resiliency and the quality required to make it in Major Junior. For example, after being scratched for a number of games, he got into playoff games on the

"IN SMALL REMOTE VILLAGES YOU NEED GOOD COACHING THAT WILL HELP KIDS DEVELOP AND ACHIEVE GOALS."

level while living in the relative isolation of Waskaganish.

So what sets these young men apart from the hundreds of Cree teens who play hockey every winter? As both boys will readily admit, it is all about three things: love of the game, having a commitment to excellence and, perhaps most importantly, the support of their family.

"You need a good truck," says Brett and Alexander's father, Charles J.

to discover that he has a simple philosophy towards hockey and its value for his sons.

"Coaches want players who are serious, players who come to practice and work hard and those are habits that players need to learn from the beginning," explains Charles. "Kids down south are in a structured program right from the beginning. But here (in the North) we don't have organized hockey until pee-

3rd / 4th line and ended up finishing the playoffs on the 1st and 2nd line."

But last year's success does not guarantee Brett a spot on this year's Val-d'Or squad.

"We made a lot of trades in June and added five established forwards," says Dumont. "Brett knows what the situation is. It will be tough for him. We expect more consistency and leadership and for him to be the speedster he was in the last year's playoffs every single game this year."

Brett understands what he is up against. For him, the hardest thing about making the jump to Major Junior Hockey has been "the competition".

"It is real fast and players are stronger than I thought," says Brett. "The competition and staying away from my family are the hardest parts."

The move from small communities to larger cities is often the biggest hurdle for young Cree players. For many, it may represent the first and longest time they have spent away from their homes. Culture shock, homesickness and general shyness can be great obstacles for young players living and playing away from home. And according to Charles Hester, this can have a huge impact on whether or not a team will stick with a young Native player.

According to Charles, "If there are two players who are about the same level, the team will select the player who is not Native because he has less stuff to deal with. That is not to say that coaches won't give a chance to a Native kid. If there is a kid out there who is serious, is willing to work hard, do all the things that are necessary, they will get a chance. But it is tougher for kids coming from the North."

Dumont feels that young Native players share the same challenges as players coming from remote communities across Quebec.

"It is always a shock when (young players) go to a big town far away from home. It brings a lot of new sources of anxiety. What I find with kids who come from remote towns or First Nations communities is that those who go to hockey schools outside their village, who play in the Hockey Quebec system, they

learn at a young age to adjust to that environment. Same as any Quebec player going to Hockey Canada – the program will not adjust to the player, the player must adjust to the program," explains Dumont.

"Players like Brett – he played in the Hockey Quebec system. It has allowed him to see the culture, and see how the system works."

So, how can young players living in remote communities get better prepared to compete at a high level?



Brett Hester comes to the defence of a teammate in a fight against Rimouski's Etienne Boutet - February 5, 2011

"No doubt having coaches in remote places is definitely an answer," says Dumont. "In small remote villages you need good coaching that will help kids develop and achieve goals. It is an issue in all small communities across Quebec, whether they are Cree territory or small towns."

Charles Hester agrees with his son's coach. "The thing is that we have to get these kids into a system when they are young. They have to learn how to play within systems. Having individual skills alone is not enough to be successful. The next step is to develop coaches."

Given the success that his boys are enjoying in Midget AAA and the QMJHL, does Charles have any advice for hockey parents who want to give their children a chance to excel on the ice?

"There are a lot of sacrifices, time wise, travelling and financially. Sometimes we have to drive 12 hours just for a hockey practice. Then the following weekend we drive hours to a tournament," said Charles after a long pause.

"As long as the kids enjoy it, we don't really push them. They have to want it. That is my advice I give to parents. If their kids love the game enough and they want it enough, than be willing to make some sacrifices. But it is never a good idea to push them."

Like father, like son, Brett has advice for his brother Alexander, and other players trying to reach the next level.

"Believe in yourself. Give it all you've got. Ignore everything else and just play hockey, and it will make a big difference"



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The divide between two solitudes

Strateco talks about the uninformed solitude...

By Amy German

Environmental protection, sacred land, fears of water contamination and feeling the ends justifying the means were some of the reasons Crees gave for why they didn't want to see the development of an exploration ramp.

However, the folks over at Strateco, who are adamant to get the project off the ground, have their own opinion as to why the community of Mistissini isn't so keen on seeing uranium exploration happen within the Otish Mountains region.

In recent weeks the COFEX-south committee released its ruling on the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) submitted by Strateco last year, giving the project a step forward that would take Strateco closer to getting its mining exploration ramp. Since the 2010 release of the EIS, there have been hearings in Mistissini and nearby Chibougamau so that the locals, the government bodies and the company could get their say out.

Now, with the COMEX provincial report and judgments pending on whether Strateco should get its licensing to proceed, the company finds itself in quite a conundrum: how to make the project socially acceptable to a community of Crees that largely opposes it?

According to Jean-Pierre Lachance, Strateco's Executive & Exploration Vice-President, gaining public support is a simple matter of putting the right information out there, because hey, who wouldn't want a uranium project on their traditional territory?

"Nobody is perfect but we have worked quite a bit since 2006 to inform the population, but maybe we did not do this the right way. Perhaps we put too much emphasis on the leaders instead of the community, despite the fact that we had a focus group in 2008," explained Lachance.

Looking back at the past few years, Lachance said Strateco has made many

attempts to sell the idea of getting this project under way to the Crees, but that perhaps too much of the focus has been on the leadership of the community and on the focus groups that the company managed to set up.

Lachance stated that it is Strateco's view now that perhaps they did not disseminate the information in a way that the average community member

"FOR EXAMPLE, GROUPS LIKE THE CREE TRAPLINE ASSOCIATION. THEY ARE VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE LAND AND THE ENVIRONMENT, THEY ARE THE NEXT STEP TO GET CLOSER TO THE COMMUNITY, NOT ONLY THE LEADERS BUT THE COMMUNITY ITSELF."

would be able to grasp the company's vision when it comes to uranium exploration and eventual mining.

"Now we are reopening the dialogue with the community and in the near future, like in September, we are expecting to go back into the community to explain the project, but also to get the concerns of people from a focus group. We have found out that it is better to go and talk to various groups.

"For example, groups like the Cree Trapline Association. They are very important for the land and the environment, they are the next step to get closer to the community, not only the leaders but the community itself," said Lachance.

While *the Nation* tried to tell Lachance he was most likely referring to the Cree Trappers' Association, Lachance paid no heed to any of *the Nation's* clarifications throughout the course of the interview.

Lachance also seemed quite unconvinced when it came to the community's outright opposition to seeing the Otish Mountains developed for a ura-

nium project. While *the Nation* pressed that the community has already said it does not want the project and does not want to see a uranium project for any amount of money, Lachance continued to maintain that the community is simply lacking information.

When asked how Strateco was planning on dealing with the communi-

ty remaining unswayable when it came to the project for any sum of compensation, he stated, "I respect what you are saying but it is not that the entire community doesn't want it. I think that what we have here is a lack of information."

Lachance then began to describe a trip that some of the families who claim the Matoush traplines took to visit the community of Rabbit Lake in Saskatchewan whose land has also been developed for uranium mining.

"They have been living there and they are still healthy and so eventually what is good for the community is not bad within itself. When it gets down to it, the more people that visit the mine and the communities around, this is what needs to be done.

"We can understand that the community is going to hear us and they are going to say 'Of course, you are the proponent – you are going to say this and that.' But we want to go further than this, getting closer to the people and opening up a dialogue," said Lachance.

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Cree School Board
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ANNUAL REPORT
2010-2011

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According to Lachance, this Saskatchewan trip was also about showing the Crees that the government departments in charge of controlling the mining industry can keep people living nearby safe.

"They need to see what is going on because all we have here is Strateco the proponent and on the other hand you have the CNSC (Canadian Nuclear Safety

some Elders at the Cree Trapline Association and it's not important. I won't mention their name, but this person is a leader.

"We talked to them to look at the project on the side, he was not in favour of the project at the beginning, but he has an open mind and he was very vocal and told us that the Crees just wanted to make sure that the

President Guy Hébert to find out more about the Matoush Project, it was implied that the community supported the project. The announcement stated: "On Nov. 26, 2010, Strateco announced that it has received strong support from all the parties involved in the public hearings held in Quebec in this matter."

In response to this, Lachance explained that it was really others who merely misinterpreted the company but that they had made good since in regards to this.

"This was done wrong and I guess I remember that Guy Hébert, our CEO, sent a letter, well, not to apologize but I think to the Grand Chief or the Grand Council because he never really said this. It was interpreted as this and I think that this was not good."

As for the Grand Council of the Crees and the moratorium it has called for on uranium mining within Mistissini territory, Lachance also chalks this up to the GCC not having the right information. For, if they did, there wouldn't be a moratorium.

While Lachance continuously argued that it is only those who are uninformed about uranium production who would oppose it, when asked if this belief prevailed when it came to the GCC, who have access to the best experts and specialists, Lachance was certain that the GCC would change its mind once properly informed.

"We have not yet had the opportunity to meet with the members of the Grand Council and explain the project in terms of where we are going and what we are doing. It is a must, otherwise of course there is a moratorium as it is normal to ask for a moratorium if you are not well informed," said Lachance.

And so, while Lachance has said Strateco may have failed at getting its message and vision across to the Crees, never fear, the company will be stepping up these efforts in the coming months.

As for the project itself, more information is being anticipated within the coming weeks on whether Strateco will be receiving its licensing to proceed with the exploration ramp.

"WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT SOMETHING AND YOU HEAR ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED IN THE PAST IN THE 1950S, WOW, IT IS SCARY, EVERYBODY NATURALLY WILL BE SCARED. BUT THEN, THERE IS A BRIGHT SIDE OF THE MOON AND A DARK SIDE OF THE MOON AND SO THERE IS A BRIGHT SIDE OF GOING WITH NUCLEAR ENERGIES AND IT IS A GOOD ENERGY."

Commission) who is like their God and they are next to each other and this is the most controlled mining industry.

"You can't fool around with the CNSC because they will close down everything and this is only for an underground exploration project," he added.

When prompted again to respond to how the company was planning on addressing a community that does not want the project, Lachance rebutted with how it is just a portion of the community that doesn't want the project. At that, there will always be some who will hold out against the project but his implication was that they were a faction group and not the majority of the community.

Lachance said this despite the fact that the community, its Chief, Richard Shecapio, and even the Grand Council of the Crees had stated numerous times that Mistissini doesn't want the project.

"First of all they are only a portion of these people, they are a part of the community... With any kind of project, not just mining or whatever, it is impossible to get everyone to agree. There are always going to be those that are against it and that has to be respected but maybe or most probably the people that you have talked to are against this project. But we have talked to some Elders or some leaders of

environment wasn't disturbed in the sense of the water. The water there is the essence, it is the whole thing, and they wanted to know how we are going to deal with this," said Lachance.

When it came to the actual reasoning for why Strateco suspects Crees oppose the project, Lachance suggested that what Crees believe about uranium itself to be completely outdated and therefore frightening to them. But, Strateco believes it's nothing a little education from them can't resolve.

"When you don't know about something and you hear about what happened in the past in the 1950s, wow, it is scary, everybody naturally will be scared. But then, there is a bright side of the moon and a dark side of the moon and so there is a bright side of going with nuclear energies and it is a good energy," said Lachance.

As for the allegation that Strateco has been telling the media and potential investors in Europe that everyone involved is behind the project, Lachance said it was everybody else that got it wrong and not the company.

The Nation has stated in previous issues that according to a December 23 advertisement released by Cornis Consult Finance of Geneva, Switzerland, calling on interested parties to attend a lunch in London, England in January 2011 with Strateco



A First Nations presence

The Terres en vues festival highlights Indigenous culture in downtown Montreal

By Amy German

One of the biggest concepts behind the Terres en vues/ Land InSights festival is to bring not only local but international Indigenous culture into the spotlight for the purpose of cultural sharing and learning.

After undergoing a complete and total rebirth last year, moving from June to August and repackaging the festival to fit in Montreal's hip and ultra-modern Place des Festival space from an east-end park, *the Nation* is happy to report that the festival was in fact the desired teaching and sharing tool it was honed to be.

This year's event included the 21st annual film and video competition, conferences, a parade, a series of cultural dancing displays and art exhibitions.

According to founder André Dudemaine, this year was a resounding success because they managed to pull off a weeklong event with a wide range of functions between Montreal and satellite events on the Kahnawake Mohawk Reserve for around \$1 million.

Some of the festival highlights included two major concerts featuring rapper, Samian on August 4 and Inuk songstress Elisapie Isaac on August 5.

Walking around at the new festival space, with the different events and kiosks throughout the area as well as a performance of powwow dancing, the atmosphere was enchanting yet not overwhelming.

While the dancing and traditional singing took place on the main stage, about a 100 feet away was the festival's crowning glory, an opaque modern teepee representation over a fountain display that festival-goers dipped their feet and bodies into in the 30+ degree heat.

Over on the grassy knoll, Archéo-Québec had set up a mock archeological dig to give festival-goers a taste of what they could find should they go out on an actual dig. The kiosk was there in conjunction with Quebec's Archeology Month, running from August 1-31.

"Right here we are doing an archeological dig simulation. We have taken some real artifacts from the Lachine Museum and placed them into the dirt so that we can show people how we do an archeological dig," said Nathalie Barbe from Archéo-Québec.

Not too far from the dig, the festival had a large protected fire space set up to showcase something common to the Native traditional experience throughout Quebec – duck smoking over a fire.

While the person manning the fire was a Mexican Indigenous exchange student named Gustavo most likely hadn't participated in anything of the likes since he had been in Canada, he said he felt ultimately proud to participate as an Indigenous person.

At one of the traditional tables, Annette Nolette, an Abenaki from Odanak, had her own handmade goods on display. She said throughout the course of the day she had been doing craft demonstrations for tourists so that they could learn about Native culture.

"Right here I have a basket made from black ash and sweet grass, it is something that we have been doing for many years as a tradition. I have made most of this but my granddaughter has made some of it too," said Nolette.

While Batshaw Youth and Family Services were on hand to call for Aboriginal foster parents and the Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network was there to make its presence known, there were also some there to showcase services for Aboriginals.

St-Elizabeth, an online school that offers specific programs for First Nations healthcare providers, had a booth to showcase its programs.

"The courses are on a variety of different topics such as cancer care. We have a diabetes circle of care course, and one for COPD," said Susanne Stevenson. She said anyone interested in taking these courses can find out more at: www.saintelizabeth.com

Saving the best for last however, relaxing on in the park area to take in the festival experience was none other than



Canada's first ever Cree MP, the NDP's Romeo Saganash.

"I am enjoying being here very much, especially with the beautiful weather we are having. It is particularly important to continue this 'presence' because that is what festival is called: *Présence Autochtone*. We have to continue to convince people that we are here to stay and so they have to start accepting our presence," said Saganash.

While Saganash did speak of how difficult it has been to watch his dear friend and party leader, Jack Layton, take a step back from politics to deal with his cancer treatment, Saganash said by no means was this a sign that the NDP was showing any weakness. For that matter, he said the foundations Layton had built would only serve to keep the party strong while he recuperates.

But getting back to the festival...

"I have not participated very much here but the best part for me is meeting the people who attend the festival. Just walking around and seeing these people for the first time since the elections has been great and they are taking advantage of that, wishing me luck and that is the best part," said Saganash.

He too said he was looking forward to future years of celebrating this festival in Montreal and hopes that it continues to get bigger and better in the years to come.



Hydlo and FRIENDS unplugged



Hydlo and Friends is a program broadcast by JBCCS. Its hosts, Luke and Réal, discuss various matters related to Hydro-Québec activities on Eeyou Istchee lands. Swapping their mike for a pen, they invite you to explore various aspects of the Eastmain-1-A/Sarcelle/Rupert project.

The majestic Rupert flows on

Before partially diverting the Rupert, HQ/SEBJ made a firm commitment with the river's users: to ensure that the entire length of the river remains navigable, while providing favourable habitat for fish. This month, Luke and Réal invite you to take a little quiz, to test your knowledge of the new conditions on the Rupert.



KP 85

True or false?



Mervin Erless

The Rupert is still a great river to boat on.

True!

Despite the presence of exposed banks along some stretches of the river that are not influenced by the hydraulic structures, water levels on the Rupert are being maintained along nearly half its length, between KP 0 and KP 314, and HQ/SEBJ has undertaken to make sure that the entire river remains navigable, with the exception of the whitewater stretches, within a channel at least one metre deep.

So far, the studies conducted to monitor navigation have brought certain difficulties to light—the presence of shoals and rocks between KP 10 and 20.3, for example. This issue will be examined closely over the next few months to identify and mark out a channel that is easy to navigate. In addition, navigation charts are being produced and will be made available to users of the river over the coming weeks.

The portages on the Rupert are barely usable, if at all.

Partly true... but soon to be false!

In 2009 and 2010, a detailed characterization of the condition of all portages on the river was conducted with the tallymen, to determine the actions that needed to be taken at locations where the water levels had dropped after diversion. These actions included extending the existing portages, creating new ones, realigning the trails, and generally improving the condition of the portages by building footpaths in wetland areas and/or small foot bridges across streams, as well as pruning, slashing and removing debris. Signage will also be put up along the shore to ensure that the portages are clearly marked.

The work, which will be carried out by the tallymen, will involve some thirty portages and is scheduled for completion by the end of the year.



HQ/SEBJ is relocating all Cree camps along the Rupert.

False.

However, meetings will be held with all land users having camps along stretches of the river where water levels are not maintained by a hydraulic structure. HQ/SEBJ will work with land users to determine whether the partial diversion of the river and the low water levels have modified accessibility to, or use of, the camps, as well as the measures to be taken, if necessary, such as building a slipway, developing shore access, relocation, etc.

So far, all of the land users who needed to relocate their camps have chosen new sites along the shores of the Rupert, in areas where the water levels are being maintained by hydraulic structures.



Réjean Gagnon, Project Manager at HQ/SEBJ, exchanging a handshake with Luke Tent, Tallyman of trapline R17. Mr. Tent, whose trapline borders the Rupert River, benefited from a number of measures designed to mitigate the project's impact on his land.



Reelected and it feels so good!

Stan Louttit gets second term as Grand Chief of the Mushkegowuk Council

By Amy German

Having been reelected by acclamation on July 29, Mushkegowuk Grand Chief Stan Louttit hasn't skipped a beat, continuing to work diligently on the major projects that are most important to his people.

From the way it sounds, he is hardly even taking time to celebrate. While he laughed at the notion that perhaps no one else could do the job as well as he could and so why even try to vie for his job, Louttit has his nose back to the grindstone to ensure progress for his people.

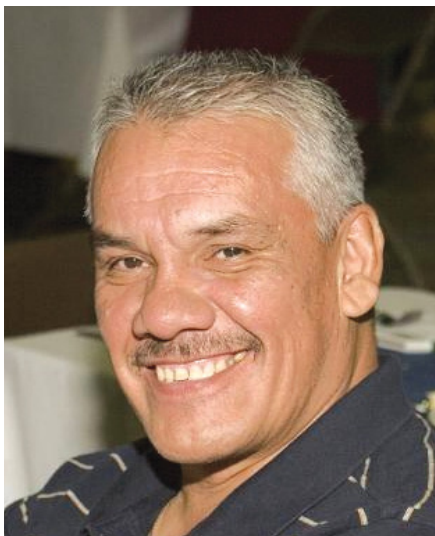
In discussing what the Ontario Cree communities under the Mushkegowuk Council could be anticipating during his upcoming four-year term, Louttit said the biggest focus would be on ensuring that all-season road network for the communities to be connected to the highway grid completes the pre-feasibility phase is of the utmost priority.

"As most people know, to undertake these kinds of major projects, you can't always get all of the pieces in place in a six-month or one-year period. Sometimes it can take several years," said Louttit.

This project will see the connection all of the Mushkegowuk communities, including Attawapiskat, Kashechewan, Fort Albany, Moose Cree and Moosonee, with the southern highway corridor in the Cochrane-Timmins area.

Louttit said the pre-feasibility phase is almost completed save for a few communities that have yet to go through the consultation phase for feedback but that the process has been going very well.

"We have had very positive comments from the people and really haven't had anyone saying that this is not good as we all see the necessity and the requirement of an all-season road and moving forward for quality of life and decreased cost of living and all of those factors as well," said Louttit.



Mushkegowuk Grand Chief Stan Louttit

Aboriginal employment and training programs to ensure that the people of the region are included in the employment boom resulting from the road construction is another priority that the Grand Council will be focusing on and Louttit said they will be looking to the federal and provincial governments to ensure this happens.

Also ranking high on the list of priorities: resource revenue sharing from the mining boom that the northern sector of the province is experiencing. Much like the Cree territory in Quebec, Mushkegowuk territory also has major mining projects slated for development and rather than just seeing a measly few million handed out from the mining companies, Louttit said his people want to be major players in any development on their territory.

In particular, Louttit was talking about the area dubbed the "Ring of Fire" that is slated for major mining development by Noront Resources Ltd among others.

"They sound good but they pretend to consult with you and pretend to accommodate you and just give you a couple of million dollars to make you happy, but we are not going to be satisfied with that. What we are saying is that

we want a revenue-sharing agreement as they are going to be making millions of dollars off our land and we are not going to be satisfied with just one or two million. We want to be major players and be part of the ownership of the company. We are looking at this as the sky is the limit here," said Louttit.

Whether his communities will have the legal grounds to do so in terms of their treaty is another story. At the moment the Mushkegowuk Council is gearing up to debate changes that were seemingly made to Treaty 9 in 1905 by the Crown and province.

As diaries of the commissioners who originally worked out the treaty with the Cree ancestors of the territory have been uncovered, it has been shown that what the Cree were agreeing to wasn't reflected in the treaty drawn up by Ottawa and Ontario.

Louttit said the Mushkegowuk are hoping to come to a decision on how to proceed when they meet for their Annual General Assembly on September 19.

Other than that, Louttit said there are also other projects that the Mushkegowuk Grand Council will be keeping an eye out for and ensuring that Attawapiskat finally gets the school it was promised by Aboriginal Affairs.

"It has been sidetracked twice already by different ministers and so I want to be working closely to ensure that they have a good project. We are regularly communicating with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs to see that this is moving forward," said Louttit.

And, as always, while all of this is going on, Louttit said the reclamation of nationhood to see the Mushkegowuk communities evolve with greater self-governance will also be another constant focus.

Despite the enormity of these projects, Louttit is determined to see that they all come to fruition.

A royal farce

By Lyle Stewart

You may have heard that the federal government is changing the names of the three main branches of our armed forces back to what they were 50 years ago: the Royal Canadian Navy, the Royal Canadian Air Force, and the Canadian Army (which apparently never warranted the connection to the world's richest welfare bums, lucky them).

Last week, Defence Minister Peter MacKay made the announcement on the 100th anniversary of the date that King George V bestowed the "Royal" designation on the Canadian Navy. Said MacKay of the move: "The country that forgets its history does so at its own peril."

It's a purely symbolic move, but as symbolism, it gives us a pretty good idea of where we are headed under a majority Conservative government. And that's back, way back, to a time when the lowly commoners didn't question their betters.

We saw some of the preparatory campaign for this change in the Conservative government's enthusiastic sponsorship of the embarrassing tour of Canada this summer by Prince William and his unblushing new bride, "Princess" Kate, who to our delight decided not to wear underwear beneath her skirt on a windy day during one of her Canadian events.

That last bit of crumpet was the best part of a phenomenon that saw the pro-Conservative mainstream media embrace the royal brats with a fervour that would have you believe that these two kids on a life-long luxury vacation were heroes of some sort. But no, actual good work doesn't compare any more to celebrity worship and endless, cringe-inducing analysis of what Kate wears or how she does her hair.

For the Conservatives, however, this is great journalism. Get the so-called reporters to focus on the unelected royal figureheads while the actual business of government receives no scrutiny whatsoever.

Canadians, of whatever origin, should see this as what it is: an insult for our country, its history and its accomplishments. Far from forgetting our history, we need to remember it in order to understand why we dropped the "royal" designations for our naval and air forces in the first place.

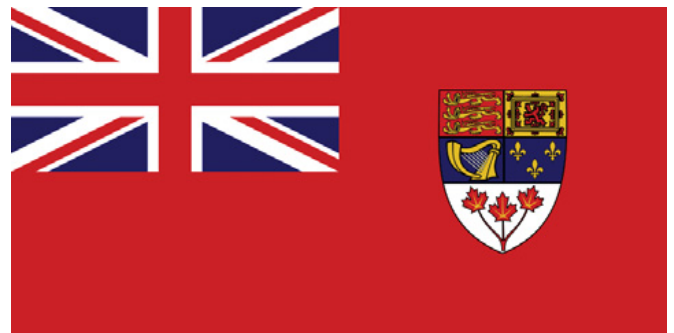
Indeed, let's not forget the sacrifice by British generals of thousands of Canadian troops in a doomed and disastrous raid on Dieppe during World War II. Of course, these soldiers belonged to the non-royal Canadian Army, and thus perhaps didn't deserve greater consideration. But the point remains: insisting on the royal designation was a way of diminishing our own independence in favour of a greater loyalty to an unelected and unrepresentative authority. And, as Dieppe demonstrated, with the results one could expect. That episode alone amply demonstrates the peril of forgetting one's history, but not in the way Peter MacKay meant.

Let's look further back in our military history. Canada actually did not have an independent foreign policy and control

over our own armed forces before World War I. Thus, when Britain declared war on Germany in 1914, Canada was automatically at war, and our young men and women in uniform were hers to command. That's what it means to have "royal" armed forces: we are ruled by foreign royalty.

Canadian heroism and sacrifice during World War I led to our recognition on the world stage as a truly independent nation. That's why Canada symbolically waited three days before declaring war on Germany at the outset of the Second World War; as a way of reminding the world that the duly elected Canadian government alone now controlled our military forces, and thus our nation's destiny.

The culmination of that proud history came when we dropped the royal appendages to the navy and air force, adopted our own flag, and ultimately, repatriated the constitu-



Next step: bring back the old flag

tion. The Conservative Party, of course, opposed all three moves to demonstrate Canadian sovereignty in favour of a servile posture to a faded colonial power.

In any country with a colonial past, you will find a former elite that depended on the patronage of foreign masters for its status, material perks and sense of culture. This class is infused with nostalgia for a golden past that is largely myth and has little to do with the challenges of the modern era. The Conservative Party is playing on this nostalgia partly to satisfy its political base, but also to prepare the larger Canadian public for other trappings of aristocracy: the slow strangling of democracy in favour of unchecked political power.

The irony is that the Conservatives of today don't give a fig for the connection to the British royal family. That's so much fluff to disguise the real agenda of giving up our democratic power to the hidden power of its corporate agenda, an agenda controlled by today's colonial masters in the United States. And therein lies the unintended truth behind Peter MacKay's snobby lesson on the peril of forgetting one's history. Lest we forget, indeed.

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UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

Hope springs eternal

by Xavier Kataquapit

Every summer I attend a few First Nation gatherings. It is part of the tradition of my people to come together to socialize, learn, share and heal. Such events dedicated to young First Nation people I find the most beneficial.

It is sad but true that Aboriginal people of this country account for a large number of suicides. The terrible thing is that most of these untimely deaths involve our young people. I am grateful to all those First Nation leaders, organizational workers and community members for developing all types of programs aimed at suicide prevention.

One event, the Wabun Youth Gathering, which I attend every summer in July, is a leader in this area in terms of bringing together local First Nation youth from the communities of Wabun Tribal Council. This event has been running five years now so I have actually had the opportunity to watch the development of many of the young people who have participated in this gathering over time.

For most of these kids it starts when they are around eight years of age and they keep coming back into their teens. It always makes me feel good when I see these bright young people coming together in the spirit of the traditional gathering. Like all great events the secret in success has to do with the people behind the scenes.

At Wabun Tribal Council I give thanks to Jean Lemieux, the organization's Health Director who dedicated herself to following through on the vision of an Elder, Thomas Saunders of Brunswick House First Nation. Before he died he asked Lemieux to develop an annual gathering where young people could get the help they needed to move forward in life. Lucky for Jean she had Mike Archer, Wabun's Crisis Team Coordinator, to turn to. Mike, who is known as the big guy with a big heart, is one of those no-fooling-around, down-to-earth, get-it-done guys.

The Wabun executive and Chiefs immediately threw their support behind the idea of developing a gathering for Wabun youth and with funding help also from Health Canada, Mike and Jean launched the Wabun Youth Gathering. Most importantly, the Wabun young people showed up to participate in the gathering.

I know what life is like in a First Nation community. Often these communities are struggling with drug and alcohol addic-

tions, long-term unemployment, crowded housing and a general feeling of hopelessness. The opportunity for a kid to actually be given the gift of a break in a safe, comfortable place, like the Eco Lodge in Elk Lake where the event is held, was amazing. These kids showed up ready to be entertained, well fed and cared for. They were in for a lot more.

The first thing they came to realize very quickly was that there were rules and that Big Mike was in charge. Things got a lot better after that and suddenly these youngsters were bonding with their peers from the other Wabun First Nations in workshops, exercises and activities with most having to do with traditional teachings and cultural knowledge.

I was pleased to see them mingle with Elders, like Vina Hendrix from Matachewan FN, as they learned from all kinds of facilitators about traditional crafts and art, survival skills, living on the land, healing through music, Native dance and drumming. All of these teachings were based on providing hope and a healing for the young participants. They did so under themes of respect and humility.

Lucky for me I got to participate in a lot of these teachings and I learned so much. I was also amazed at the strong support from our First Nation leadership. Stan Beardy, the Grand Chief of Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN), actually took time out of his hectic schedule to visit the kids and share his thoughts of hope with them. This year he was joined by Deputy Grand Chief Terry Waboose, Ben Cheechoo, NAN Governance Secretariat Director and former Grand Chief of NAN, and Dr Emily Faries, Education Jurisdiction Negotiator, NAN Governance Secretariat.

Some might wonder at all the energy, time and money spent on focusing on these Wabun Youth. I can attest after five years of attending the Wabun Youth Gathering that I see real progress in real people who are now better equipped for dealing with life. I see young Native people who have expanded their view of the world through friendships with kids in other communities. I see these First Nation youth moving ahead with hope and attending post-secondary school and starting careers. Most importantly I see them taking what they have learned and bringing that back to their First Nations. I am reminded of that old saying, "Hope springs eternal".

CLASSIFIEDS

WANTED

We are looking for stories about strange sightings in the James Bay area. If you have any or know anyone who does, please contact us at Km509@rezolution-pictures.com

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Missing Children's

Network: They'll help you find kids who have run away or disappeared.
514-843-4333.

Kid's Help Phone Line:

1-800-668-6868
(www.kidshelpphone.ca)

Youth helpline:

1-800-263-2266 (www.teljeunes.com)

Parent helpline:

1-800-361-5085 (www.parenthelpline.ca)

Drugs: help and reference:

1-800-265-2626
(www.drogue-aidereference.qc.ca)

Gambling: help and reference:

1-800-265-2626 (www.info-reference.qc.ca)

S.O.S. Conjugal Violence:

1-800-363-9010 (www.sosviolenceconjugale.com)

Health and Sexuality resources center:

1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm)
(www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline:

1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal:

1-866-403-4688.
(www.nwsm.info)

Suicide Action Québec:

1-866-277-3553

Residential School

Survivors:

A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: <http://www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources.html>

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PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The *Sustainable Forest Development Act*, passed into law in April 2011, introduces fundamental changes in how Québec's forests are managed. Consequently, local forests will be created from public forest land starting on April 1, 2013 to promote the socioeconomic development of regional communities.

Québec's Ministry of Natural resources and Wildlife (MRNF) therefore invites the public to take part in a public consultation concerning the selection, implementation and operation of local forests.

The consultation document and information pertaining to this consultation are available at: www.consultation-forets-proximite.mrnf.gouv.qc.

Members of the general public can find out more by attending one of these meetings:

Towns

Chibougamau

Date: September 6, 2011
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: Council meeting room – 650, 3^e Rue

Lebel-sur-Quévillon

Date: September 7, 2011
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: Room 6 at the town hall – 500, place Quévillon

Matagami

Date: September 8, 2011
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: Multipurpose room, Civic Centre – 30, rue Cavellier

Beaucanton

Date: September 12, 2011
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: Municipal building gym – 2709, boul. du Curé-McDuff

From September 6 to November 11, 2011, members of the general public can express their points of view online at www.consultation-forets-proximite.mrnf.gouv.qc.ca or by e-mail at consultation-forets-proximite@mrnf.gouv.qc.ca.

Québec 

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS SETTLEMENT IMPORTANT DEADLINES

September 19, 2011 - Common Experience Payment (CEP)

CEP is paid to former students who resided at a listed Residential School

September 19, 2012 - Independent Assessment Process (IAP)

You may be eligible if you suffered sexual or serious physical abuse or other abuses that caused serious psychological effects.

APPLY NOW to receive the compensation owed to you.

For legal advice or assistance call 1-888-565-9912

Deborah Hawken
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Raymond Murray
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Nelligan O'Brien Payne
www.nelligan.ca

KWE • WACHIYA BIENVENUE • WELCOME

In the spirit of "Nations Walking Together"

Join us for our

Chibougamau First Traditional Pow Wow

August 27-28, 2011

This is an event without alcohol, drugs and no domestic animals will be allowed on site.

ACTIVITIES

Saturday & Sunday:

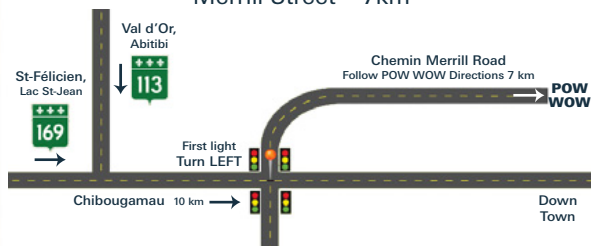
Grand entry (noon) and cultural demonstration

ON SITE

Camping Grounds Food Vendors
Traditional Arts, Crafts

LOCATION

Former Golf Club / Lac Dufault,
Merrill Street – 7km





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